

A Study on Planning Stages of Urban Resettlement (With special Reference to Chithra lane Resettlement Project: Colombo Sri Lanka.)

(1) Department of Social Sciences, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka, Belihuloya, Sri Lanka.
(email:vineeshiya@gmail.com)

Abstract: Sri Lanka has significance experiences of resettlement in the process of society rebuilding. This study attempts to analyze the planning stages of a urban relocation settlement current issue-taking place in *Chithralane* settlement in Narahenpita, to find out the issues relate with new settlement, evaluate the successfulness and identify the impact of resettlement of the encroached community. Research findings concluded that this relocation process has given an impact with all negative, positive, and neutral effects on this dwellers and positive effect seems to dominate.

Keywords: relocation, urban development

Introduction

Sri Lanka has significance experiences of resettlement in the process of society rebuilding. The colonization scheme in the dry zoon was the first experience of resettlement in the context of Sri Lanka. Secondly, we have experience of resettling of the tsunami affected community and other natural disaster related experiences mainly flood and landslide. Next most significant reason is development induced resettlement or relocation. Most of development projects that taken placed in Sri Lankan context have led massive resettlement process. In addition, in other way Informal, community is a main problem to the society and those people tend to settle down on place creating the problem of slums and shanty development.

Urban, City, or Town planning is the discipline of land use planning which deals with the physical, social, and economic development of metropolitan regions, municipalities and neighborhoods. Other professions deal in more detail with a smaller scale of development, namely architecture, landscape architecture and urban design. Regional planning deals with a still larger environment, at a less detailed level (Urban Development Authority).

Relocation is defined as a process whereby a community's housing, assets, and public infrastructure are rebuilt in another location. An effective relocation plan is one that affected population helps develop and views positively. This study attempts to analyze the planning stages of a urban relocation settlement. The study was identified as a current issue-taking place in *Chithralane* settlement in Narahenpita. Finding out the level of successfulness of the planning stages based on the conceptual framework developed by Cernea and Scudder has analyzed. In addition, issues relate with new settlement and the overall impact of resettlement of the encroached community was taken in to account.

The data collection was two types, Primary and Secondary Data and the total 20 were the sample size and the sample selection was based on Simple Random Sampling Method. Data Collection occupied Primary data through primary observation, structured interview, and group discussion. Secondary data, UDA Sources, books and journals used to collect.

Objectives

General Objective –

- q To identify the planning stages of the resettlement.

Specific Objectives –

- q To find out the issues relate with new settlement.
- q To evaluate the successfulness of resettlement project
- q To identify the overall impact of resettlement of the encroached community.

Moving to the city plan history of Sri Lanka it goes back to 1948, the Government invited Sir Patrick Abercrombie to prepare a regional plan for Colombo and its surrounding region covering an area of 220 square miles. When he prepared the first town plan for the city of Colombo his major concern was housing. It was felt that Abercrombie's plan was not adequate to accommodate the rapid changes taking place in the urban areas, especially in Colombo and its surrounding sub urban areas. The Colombo regional structure plan prepared by UNDP in 1978 also considered housing as a key issue (Herath,N.P,JayasundaraD:2007).

The Master Plan for the Colombo Metropolitan Region of 1978 consisted of two interrelated documents, namely the Colombo Metropolitan Regional Structure Plan and the Colombo Urban Area Plan. The Colombo Master Plan Project, which pursued a balanced regional development strategy, covered the Colombo District including the area now classified as Gampaha District and part of Kalutara District.

The most recent city plan was the Colombo Metropolitan Regional Structure Plan (CMRSP) prepared in 1998 by the Urban Development Authority, whose overall objective to prepare action programmes for the development of the region with a view to meeting the aspirations of the citizens and improving the quality of life of the people of Western Province and the people of Sri Lanka (Urban Development Authority).

Urban is a place where “Spatial land use or organization characterized by dense population, concentrated living space, social networks, and a verity of economic activities and life styles”(Gregory D. and Gerry R.1993:3). City of Colombo development plan - 1999 promoted high-density development within the garden city development and one of major objective of that is promoting high –rise development in identified high potential areas such as Pettah, Union place, Kollupitiya, Maradana, Narahenpita and also Borella and between Galle road and Duplication road.

The past hundred years has seen enormous changes in housing standards and conditions in the developed North but reality for millions of households in developing countries remains one of absolute housing deprivation, subsistence living and marginality (paddison:2001).

The accelerated pace of urbanization and commercialization in the cities creating new pressures of eviction and displacement. Industrial revolutions confront very different urban conditions and housing system. Nevertheless, the rural-urban migration and the related housing pressures remain dominant forces in the world.

“worldwide, the number of homeless people can be estimated at anywhere from 100 million to 1 billion or more...the estimated of 1 billion homeless people would also include those in accommodation that is very insecure or temporary, often poor quality” (united nations center for human settlement 1996:229 cited from Paddison 2001:89).

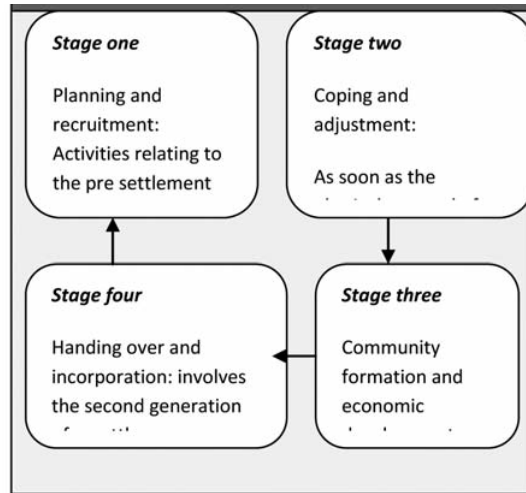
The modernist mass housing estates of the 1950 1960's and 1970's had become increasingly discredited and associated with concentrations of poor people in high rise flats in inner or peripheral urban locations. And next these solutions to the hosing problems of one period had rapidly become the social & physical housing problems of the next.

High-rise housing & poverty
Social isolation
Ghettoization

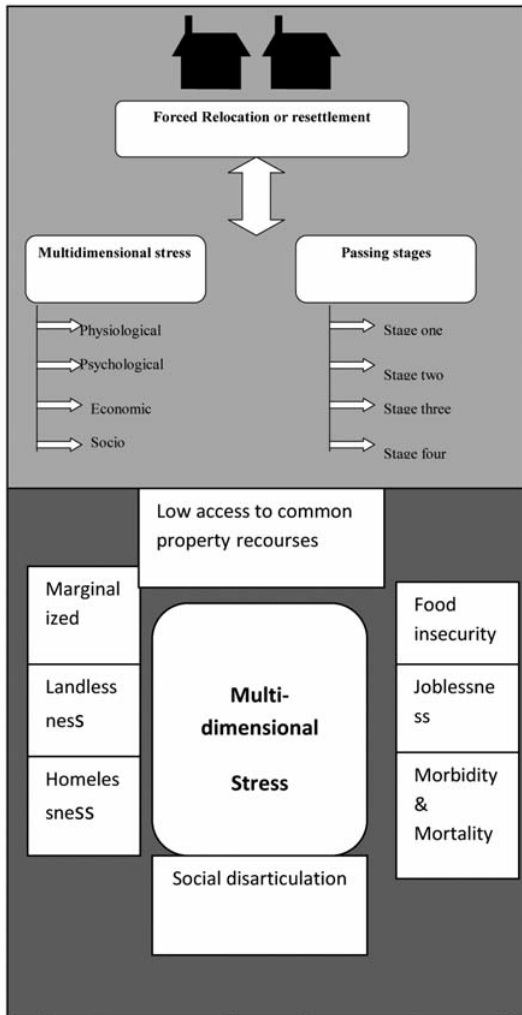
Residential segregation are some of them (Paddison: 2001).

In 1998, around the Chithra Lane, there were about 350 families were found to be as encroachers. With the implement of Chithra Lane Project, government took the decision to clear all those under served settlements.

This paper attempts to analyze the planning stages of an urban relocation or resettlement place. Therefore, I have selected the above project since is a resettlement. There are people who lived in this are from 1950's. According to primary data this project has commenced in 1998.



Conceptual Framework



Colombo is the commercial capital and most urbanized city in Sri Lanka. Due to urban migration, with people seeking better job opportunities, the low income and lower middle-income population has increased rapidly. This has resulted in unplanned and unauthorized informal settlements, mainly occupying urban areas with high commercial values. The government had implemented several housing policies to overcome this problem. Therefore, government has under taken different solutions like on site/ off site resettlement, and resettlement in high-rises through institutions like National Housing Development Authority, Urban development authority, Real Estate Exchange Limited. Resettlement is the process of moving people from underserved settlements to the well-managed apartments with basic needs. At present, resettlement in high-rise building is the widely use solution. High-rise developments particularly related to housing in the city of Colombo is somewhat a recent phenomenon (Herath,N.P, Jayasundara D:2007).

However, with the implement of this project people who live in those areas has to face with social, economic and physical changes which may be positives as well as negatives. Therefore it is very significant to take resettles perspectives on those projects and find beneficial effects. Moreover, it is effective to understand the planning stages clearly in the side of resettles. According to the structural interviews conducted with resettles, the data summarized in order to achieve the objectives of this paper. The major objective was finding out the planning stages of urban resettlement place. According to the conceptual framework they are

still in multidimensional stress although it has passed ten years after resettlement. According to my research it is shown that physiologically most of them are with the problem of landlessness. Because after the resettlement they lost their land as this is a high-rise building. And feel they do not have enough chance to planting. However, on the other hand some people are not taking it as a serious problem. They are with the idea that they got a house with water and electricity.

“space is not enough, but having electricity and water is important. and there is no space to through unclean water, to play, and to plant. if children’s going to play, others blame and come to quarrel that balls are coming to their homes. ”



Fig. 01- People who live in upstairs do not have A garden (Source- primary data-2011

Successful urban planning considers character, of “home” and “sense of place”, local identity, respect for natural, artistic and historic heritage, an understanding of the “urban grain” or “townscape,” pedestrians and other modes of traffic, utilities and natural hazards, such as flood zones (Urban Development Authority). However, in this settlement, still settlers do not feel as their own home because they do not have any legal document. For obtain deed they have to pay monthly rental over 60 years for some of them. According to the price of the house, it varies among them.

Moving to the economic and social characteristics very few are engaging in formal occupation. In addition, most of the sample is not very much bothers about the noise disturbances because they have lived with the sound for a long time & it has absorbed to their lives. When the time of data collection I could observe the different sounds coming

from the apartments, but the respondents do not feel it as a problem. Following chart shows a summary of level of education of the respondent’s.

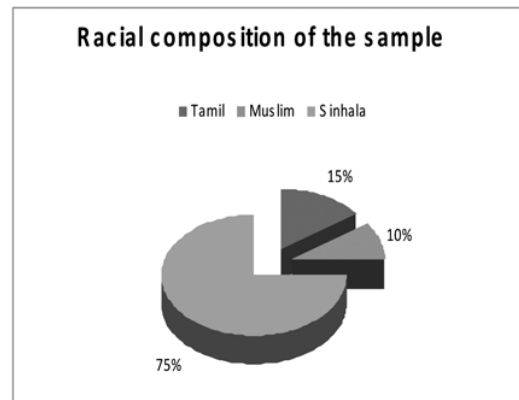
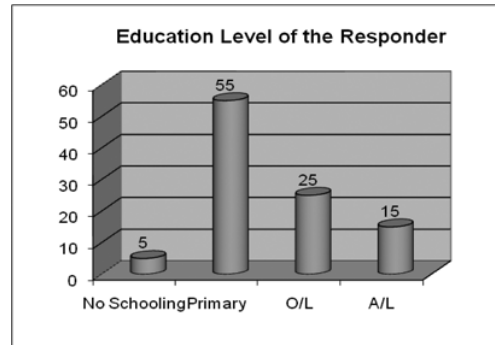


Fig 02- Salient features of the sample (Source- primary data 2011)

The unsatisfactory level of solid waste disposal has also been observed in the area. Domestic garbage is dumped in a variety of places. The socio –economic and ethnic background of squatters has a major role to play in determining the lifestyle and socio-spatial requirements of a community (Ali:2006). And the level of education is one of the determinants of the people’s income and nature of occupation. This research revealed that after the resettlement their monthly expenditure has raised than the previous.

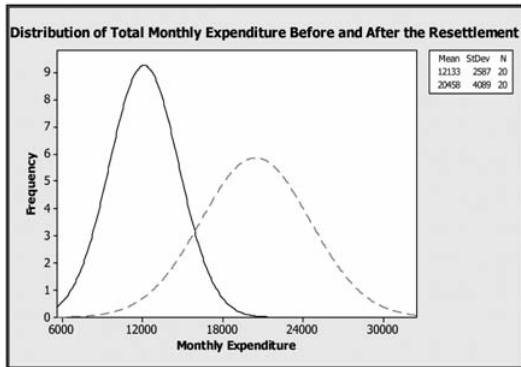


Fig. 03- Distribution of total monthly expenditure before and after the resettlement (Source- primary data 2011)

Every individual house has separate water system & electricity service. Therefore, individual house owners have to pay a monthly payment for the consumption. This expenditure they are seeing as negative impact of resettlement. Next, they have to pay monthly rent for the apartment and it varies from one house to next. It is an additional charge to them.

Most of the previous houses were buildings attached one house to another. Therefore, people had strong relationships. Especially women shared their home activities with neighboring people. As a habit there used to chat with others in evenings. All those relationships are going to loss after shifting new flats. In the new apartment they are receive units in separate floors so there is a doubt that they will lose the relationship. 95% of people are preferred to new place because of interior facilities. The new apartment has being built with all the basic requirements.

A unit consists of two bedrooms, kitchen, living area, balcony & toilet & bathroom inside the house. Previously most of people lived with public bathrooms & toilets. It had many sanitary problems. There is more possibility to spread diseases. In addition to 95%, 5% of them prefer old place because they had better house with those facilities in earlier place.



Fig. 04-Apartments with better facilities than the previous- (Source- primary data-2011)

When moving to the planning stage of this urban resettlement, in the pre settlement period these people are not with proper understanding of the project going to be established.

“We did not think anything beyond the new house which has water, electricity, bathroom, and toilet. Therefore now it is good more than previous. Expenditure is quite high but more facilities we have....”

So according to my sample it is correct to say that they were not actively participate in decision-making process. It can be a reason for increase the stress level because they get know about their situation after the resettlement but not before that so when they do not having clear picture of that people can create different views on the situation. Moreover, psychologically they may feel uncertainty.

Moving to the planning stage two, according to the conceptual framework people are still coping in to their new environment I can say according to my sample. Because they are facing number of problems in orderly, the rising expenses (graph 1). As *chithralane* is a resettlement project, there is no problem of new neighbors. However, loosing the neighbors who lived more closely is now being changed to some of them in the sample.

“People who were near by are not in previous places now. New people come to quarrel with us. So we do not going to talk”.

Looking at the stage three here it can notice that these people were spend more on assets. Their homes

are full of furniture, which can unbearable for the space where they live. that indicates their economic development. Seeing out the community formation most of them are with the view that community association's member are cunning and only for standing collecting money from them.

former we had diffrent comitees. now we do not have. commetee people are theives. they collect money and run....

Therefore, in here their collective activities are not salient feature. Most of them are like to be in separate. On the other way after this resettlement it can say they it leads to lose the collective behaviors among them because, now the children's do not have enough space to play. If they play in front of the houses, the neighbors are coming to quarrel. Children Park is only for children under 12. Therefore, the Childs above the category do not have a place to play. Again on the other way it can be a reason for increase the stress of the children who being undergone to the resettlement process.

In addition, the idea of political representation among the sample is almost negative. They are with the view that politicians are coming to see them only the times of elections. This is not only after the resettlement but before the situation is same.

Finally Research finding conclude that this resettlement has selective form of impact with all negative, positive, and neutral effects on lives of resettleres, and positive effect seems to dominate.

Conclusion

Generally, growth of high-rise development of urban areas has been a positive sign towards achieving urban development. Nevertheless, it results massive relocations and resettlements of the urbanities in Sri Lanka.

The research problem investigated in the study is how these urbanities do cope with the stages of resettlement process commenced by the government involvement. According to the research objectives, three major areas were discussed in the study. Finding out the issues relate with new settlement, evaluate the

successfulness of resettlement project, identify the overall impact of resettlement of the encroached community.

In order to understand the planning stages of the urban resettlement place I have made a new model combining two conceptual frameworks introduced by Thayer Scudder and Michael Cernea. Accordingly found in the research what sort of stress they face with in the stages of resettlement process and how they feel this new settlement. In addition, what are the issues relate with the new settlement being addressed.

Speaking generally this resettlement project is successful for the people who lived in underserved settlements. Although there are, some situational effects this resettlement has made selective form of impact with all negative, positive, and neutral effects on lives of resettleres, and positive effect seems to dominate.

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